

Written Testimony of Lixin Huang, MS
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Oversight Hearing on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
House Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans
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Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to testify at this important hearing. My name is Lixin Huang, and I am president of the Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, of which there are 50 in the United States. I am also president of the American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine in San Francisco. I have been actively involved in tiger conservation as it relates to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) since 1997.

I speak today on behalf of the TCM industry in the United States and a coalition of more than 30 organizations from the environmental, zoo, animal protection and TCM communities representing more than 100 organizations and millions of people worldwide, which are united under the aim of stopping tiger trade.

There are six agenda items for the 14th Conference of the Parties to CITES in The Hague this June that have implications for wild tigers. Three of the discussion documents submitted by the CITES Secretariat and/or Parties specifically mention tigers. These three include Doc. 25 on Enforcement Matters, Doc. 48 on the Relationship Between *Ex Situ* and *In Situ* Conservation, and Doc. 52 on Asian Big Cats. I also call your attention to Doc. 63 on Trade in Traditional Medicine, which has potential to help or hurt wild tigers.

The history of traditional Chinese medicine and tiger conservation

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) used tiger bone to fight pain and inflammation for centuries. However, China banned the use of tiger bone, stopped manufacturing of tiger-bone medicines and removed tiger bone from the official pharmacopeia in 1993, when CITES Parties, including the United States, made it clear that China's domestic trade in tiger derivatives was undermining CITES international ban on trade in tiger parts and products.

This prohibition was not at first embraced by the TCM community. In 1997, I attended a conference in Hong Kong that brought together TCM specialists with conservationists to discuss research and development of alternatives to tiger bone. From this point forward, I have been convinced that TCM has an obligation to do its part in saving wild tigers. That is why, in 1999, the American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine joined with China's State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine and WWF to host the "Healthy People, Healthy Planet" conference in Beijing to solidify the working relationship between TCM and conservation in securing a future for wild tigers.

Today, TCM embraces effective and plentiful alternatives to tiger bone. TCM colleges no longer teach the use of tiger bone as medicine, and legitimate, law-abiding TCM practitioners around the world no longer use tiger bone as medicine. In fact, we in the TCM industry believe that use

of tiger bone is not in the best interest of TCM's reputation as it strives to become a respected global health care system.

I continue to work closely with China's State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies in Beijing, WWF and Save The Tiger Fund to spread the word that TCM no longer uses, needs or wants tiger bone and that any attempts to reopen tiger trade in China are driven by commercial interests rather than concern for human health care.

Why CITES CoP14 will be important to tigers and traditional Chinese medicine

CITES CoP14 is likely to see a pivotal international discussion on whether China should reopen trade in products from farmed tigers, as proposed by China's wealthy tiger-farm owners.

In Annex 1 of Doc. 52 on Asian Big Cats, China's intentions to resume trade in products from farmed tigers is explicit. At the Global Tiger Forum (GTF) in Nepal last month, the Chinese government delegation included two tiger-farm owners. The Chinese researcher who made China's only presentation at the GTF said that China must reopen trade "as soon as possible" for the sake of human health needs.

As a TCM professional who works with TCM professionals around the world, including China, I will tell you that TCM is *not* asking China to reopen tiger trade. The petition to do so is coming from wealthy tiger-farm owners who wish to earn millions, if not billions, of dollars by rekindling the Chinese public's demand for tonic use of tiger-bone wine. This is a product looking for a market, rather than a market demanding a product – and giving in to these commercial interests will hurt wild tigers as well as the reputation of TCM and of China as it emerges as a global environmental leader.

Therefore, it is important that CITES Parties take a strong stance against any reopening of trade in tiger products from any source. While it is indeed China's sovereign right to set its own internal trade policies, the current trade ban was put in place in 1993 to ensure that the international tiger-trade ban was not undermined. Why ruin 14 years of hard-won progress in reducing demand for tiger products for the sake of a handful of already-wealthy business entrepreneurs?

Why the United States should take a leadership role on tigers at CITES CoP 14

In the early 1990s, the CITES Standing Committee and the United States both threatened trade sanctions against China if it did not ban domestic tiger trade. These actions encouraged China to ban tiger trade in 1993. Many tiger experts say that wild tigers are as plentiful as they are today because of the leadership of the United States in encouraging China to end its domestic tiger trade.

The TCM industry, the conservation community, the CITES Secretariat and CITES Parties again are looking toward the United States to take leadership in encouraging China to make its tiger-trade ban permanent. We believe that the United Kingdom, the European Union and tiger range states such as Bangladesh and Nepal stand ready to support retention of China's prohibition on

tiger trade. However, if the United States remains silent on the issue, other CITES Parties may do so as well, which will in effect encourage China to lift its tiger-trade ban.

Why China's tiger-trade ban is good for China and traditional Chinese medicine

I will close my remarks by reiterating that China's ban on trade in tiger products is essential for securing a future for wild tigers but also in securing the reputations of the TCM industry and China herself as good citizens of the world in this time of growing scarcity.

Please do not let a bad business decision by a few tiger-farm investors negate all of the many efforts made by the Government of China and TCM practitioners around the world, who have made 14 years of successful effort to help save wild tigers.

I encourage the United States to actively and vocally support CITES Res. Conf. 12.5 on Asian Big Cats and all other CITES resolutions related to China retaining its tiger-trade ban as a means of ensuring global compliance with the Appendix I ban on tiger trade.

Attachments: Letter to Chinese Premier Wen Jaibao, August 27, 2006
TRAFFIC brochure
Department of Interior news release, June 9, 1993